



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Mary Jane Grubb, Municipal Court Clerk

DATE: September 23, 2019

SUBJECT: Information about Driver's License Clinics

The purpose of this memo is to provide information about the driver's license recovery clinics offered quarterly by Municipal Court, which help individuals who have lost their licenses for failure to pay Department of Public Safety (DPS) surcharges. The clinics reflect a continuation of the Court's efforts toward community outreach and providing off-site court services.

Although the clinics are geared toward individuals with license issues (Driving While License Invalid, for example), staff and volunteers also provide assistance for resolution on other municipal court cases. The direct assistance offered at these clinics provides meaningful opportunities for Court staff to interact with and help Austinites in new ways, improving trust, transparency, and perception of the Court and its staff.

Judge Statman created the driver's license clinics in 2017 as part of the court's on-going efforts to assist indigent defendants. To date, clinics have been held on the following dates:

- Nov. 13, 2017
- March 30, 2018
- June 22, 2018
- Sept. 21, 2018
- Nov. 30, 2018
- March 29, 2019
- July 12, 2019

From the seven events, the Court estimates it helped resolve more than 500 outstanding cases.

The next clinic will be 3pm to 7 pm Friday, September 27, at the Austin Rutherford Lane Campus, Building 1 Auditorium, 1520 Rutherford Lane. The event is free and registration for

the clinic can be completed online at: <https://bit.ly/2lX1kbL>. Individuals will receive a confirmation email.

During the event:

- University of Texas students will perform intake and assessments and help with financial forms.
- Attorneys will help people resolve outstanding cases and apply for community service and/or hardship waivers.
- Austin Municipal Court, staff, and judges will be available to help people resolve their outstanding DPS licensure issues.

All services are provided free of charge. Spanish interpreters will be available. Licenses will not be reinstated on site; people will need to visit the DPS after resolution of their surcharge issues in order to reinstate their license. No arrests will be made on site.

The City has promoted the clinics, in English and in Spanish, by sending news releases, posting information to the City website, and creating posters and fliers about the event.

In addition to providing direct assistance to Austinites, these driver's license clinics also serve as a way to expand upon and develop partnerships with other agencies in the Austin community. The clinics are offered through the Court's partnership with Texas Fair Defense Project; Travis County Justice of the Peace, Precinct Five (though the County will not be participating in the upcoming clinic); and the University of Texas School of Law Mithoff Pro Bono Program.

The Court views these clinics as invaluable both to its commitment to providing excellent customer service as well as to its efforts to build partnerships throughout the community.

The Texas Legislature recently passed a bill repealing the Driver Responsibility Program eliminating all past, present, and future surcharges effective September 1, 2019. However, the Presiding Judge and partner organizations would like to have one last event. Going forward, the Austin Municipal Court will continue its outreach efforts by offering other types of off-site clinics and/or dockets to assist citizens in resolving their outstanding court obligations. Specific details on future efforts will be communicated as they are developed.

If you have any questions, please contact Mary Jane Grubb, Municipal Court Clerk, at 512-974-4800 or maryjane.grubb@austintexas.gov. For more information, visit austintexas.gov/departments/municipal-court.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Elaine Hart, Deputy City Manager
Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager
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